

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1: (Currently Amended): A polyelectrolyte comprising a polymer at least one cationic terpolymer prepared by polymerization of monomers of a monomer composition consisting of (i) (meth)acrylamide, a quaternized (meth)acrylamide derivative, a (meth)acrylic acid derivative and/or hydrolysis stable cationic monomers; (ii) dimethylaminopropyl acrylamide quaternized with a C₁ to C₃ alkyl or alkylene group or a benzyl group; and (iii) a quaternized dialkylamino alkyl(meth)acrylate selected from the group consisting of trimethyl ammonium methyl (meth)acrylate, triethyl ammonium methyl (meth)acrylate, trimethyl ammonium ethyl (meth)acrylate, triethyl ammonium ethyl (meth)acrylate, trimethyl ammoniumpropyl (meth)acrylate and triethyl ammonium propyl (meth) acrylate;

the composition of the polyelectrolyte being characterized by having a toxicity index

$$F_i = (Q_{TP} - 2Q_{ME})/10 \leq 1$$

where

Q_{TP} = total cationic charge of the polymer,

Q_{ME} = charge proportion of an ester-type monomer.

Claim 2: (Previously Presented): A polyelectrolyte according to claim 1, wherein the polyelectrolyte has a total charge of 1 to 99 mol%.

Claim 3: (Previously Presented): A polyelectrolyte according to claim 1, wherein the polymer has a solution viscosity of 10 to 2000 mPas.

Claim 4: (Currently Amended): A polyelectrolyte according to claim 1, wherein the quaternized acrylamide derivative dialkylamino alkyl(meth)acrylate is 3-dimethylammoniumpropyl(meth)acrylamide quaternized with methyl chloride (DIMAPA-Quat).

Claim 5: (Currently Amended): A polyelectrolyte according to claim 1, wherein the quaternized acrylamide derivative dialkylamino alkyl (meth)acrylate is 2-dimethylamino (meth)acrylate 2-dimethylammoniummethyl(meth)acrylate quaternized with methyl chloride (ADAME-Quat).

Claims 6-7 (Canceled).

Claim 8: (Previously Presented): A polyelectrolyte according to claim 1, wherein the polymer is synthesized by a gel polymerization method.

Claim 9: (Previously Presented): A polyelectrolyte according to claim 1, wherein the polymer is synthesized by an emulsion polymerization method.

Claim 10: (Previously Presented): A polyelectrolyte according to claim 1, wherein the polymer is synthesized by a suspension polymerization method.

Claim 11: (Previously Presented): A method for dewatering sewage sludge comprising utilizing the polyelectrolyte claimed in claim 1.

Claim 12: (Previously Presented): A method for purification of waste water or conditioning of potable water comprising purifying waste water or conditioning potable water with the polyelectrolyte as claimed in claim 1.

Claim 13: (Previously Presented): A method for manufacture of paper or cardboard comprising manufacturing paper or cardboard with the polyelectrolyte as claimed in claim 1.

Claim 14: (Previously Presented): A water-in-water polymer dispersion, comprising a polyelectrolyte according to claim 1.

Claim 15 (New): A polyelectrolyte according to claim 1, wherein the polyelectrolyte contains 0.1-20 wt.% of a highly cationic, low molecular weight polymer, based on the total composition of the polyelectrolyte.

DISCUSSION OF THE AMENDMENT

Claims 1-5 and 8-15 are active in the present application. Claims 6 and 7 are canceled claims. Claim 1 is amended to recite a cationic terpolymer that must be made of the three components (i)-(iii) now recited in Claim 1. Support for the amendment is found throughout the specification and in original Claim 7. Claims 4 and 5 are amended in accordance with the amendment to Claim 1.

No new matter is believed to have been added.